

Senza Sordino

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Serious Questions and Concerns ICSOM Chairperson Bruce Ridge Addresses the IEB

At the 2009 ICSOM Conference in Norfolk, Virginia, delegates presented a resolution from the floor directing the ICSOM Governing Board to make public to ICSOM members the comments that ICSOM Chairperson Bruce Ridge delivered to the International Executive Board (IEB) of the AFM in Las Vegas on July 27, 2009. These comments were delivered at the IEB's annual meeting with the Locals' Conferences Council (LCC) and the Player Conferences Council (PCC). The IEB, AFM staff, representatives of the LCC, and the heads of ICSOM, ROPA, OCSM, and the Theater Musicians Association (TMA) were present.

Although Chairperson Ridge's comments, among his calls for unity, contain criticisms of the delayed and subverted process through which the president of the AFM hired the new director of the Symphonic Services Division (SSD). The ICSOM Governing Board wishes to reemphasize, as Ridge did in his remarks, that these are not intended as criticisms of the current SSD director or staff but rather to serve as an argument for increased support for the SSD from the AFM president.

It is a pleasure to be here with you all in Las Vegas. When we gathered here last summer, I spoke to you about ICSOM's commitment to unity within our union, and about the need for a change in the perception that the Federation does not serve the needs of musicians in America's symphony orchestras as fully and completely as support provided by those musicians to the Union would seem to call for. This year of difficulty for ICSOM orchestras has not alleviated the concern I expressed to you last summer.

You all know me well, and I'm certain that you know how much it pains me that at this meeting I must deliver a difficult message.

In the 13 months since we spoke of that perception, your union members that perform in symphony orchestras have faced an unprecedented crisis. The worldwide recession and resulting economic crisis have wreaked havoc upon our orchestras and your members.

My phone rings constantly with new heartbreaking stories of orchestras struggling for survival, and AFM musicians fighting to feed their families, pay their mortgages, maintain their pensions, and remain in the profession to which they have dedicated their childhood and adult lives.

The musicians of the Honolulu Symphony, one of America's oldest and most resilient orchestras, are owed over 13 weeks in pay. Orchestra after orchestra has been approached to renegotiate their collective bargaining agreements and pressured into making concessions of sometimes huge amounts. The Cincinnati Symphony took a pay cut of 11%. My own orchestra, the North Carolina Symphony, will return to work in September to find a 17% cut in pay.

Charlotte, Detroit, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Virginia, Oregon, Atlanta, Nashville, Phoenix, Utah, Colorado, San Antonio, and many other AFM orchestras have faced this pressure.

Despite the economic downturn, attendance for many of our orchestras continues to rise! Prior to the recession, a renaissance was occurring for orchestras in America, and we believe that these orchestras will play a crucial role in the economic recovery that lies ahead. After all, 5.7 million jobs in America are provided by the arts, resulting in over \$166 billion in economic activity. In our cities, our orchestras are frequently the most visible cultural institution. We are ambassadors for our communities, and we are economic engines for business.

It brings me no pleasure to say that, while symphonic musicians have never needed the support of the Federation more, they have never had it less.

In this year of need, the major managers have had the ability to generate nearly instant surveys communicating within their network about ways to curtail the growth of our orchestras. The Federation, on the other hand, has had difficulty even producing the annual wage charts.

In this year of need, the Symphonic Services Division of the Federation has remained understaffed. Actually, "remained" is not even quite accurate. In fact, it has become more understaffed than ever before. While we have long acknowledged the need for an additional negotiator, and long advocated for the expansion of the staff, we now have (instead of a third full-time negotiator) one full-time
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Chairperson's Report by Bruce Ridge



This issue's officer reports from Chairperson Ridge and President Rood are the texts of their reports delivered to the delegates of the 2009 ICSOM Conference on August 19, 2009

Welcome to the 2009 meeting of the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians. Welcome to Norfolk, and welcome to my hometown. It was just a few blocks from here that I heard my first live symphony orchestra, which at that time was known as the Norfolk Symphony. I was privileged to join that orchestra just a few years later, when numerous mentors and heroes took me under their wings when I was just 15 years old. These musicians, some of whom are here today, were legends to me. I idolized them, and I wanted to be just like them. They taught me what it meant to be a musician, and the lessons I learned in this city some 30 years ago are carried with me through every concert I play, and to every orchestra I visit.

I am only able to stand before you today due to the mentoring and support of people and teachers too numerous to mention. I was lucky. I was welcomed and accepted by those who went before me, and I was only too eager to hear their wisdom. I also had incredible support from my family, and I remember well coming out of Chrysler Hall after evening concerts to find my parents holding hands and listening to the radio, waiting to take me home so that I could get to school the next day.

Everyone in this room has a story of someone who profoundly changed their lives when they were becoming musicians and artists. Everyone has someone who took them aside and carefully nurtured a belief that they had an ability that might allow them to achieve something greater than themselves. And now as we reach out to a new generation of musicians, we are beholden to return the favors that were granted to us.

Recently, I was reading a speech by Nelson Mandela where he said: "Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. ... And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same."

As I have prepared for this meeting in Norfolk, and this emotional homecoming for me, I have been unavoidably sentimental about my earliest days as a musician, remembering all of those "firsts" that remain ingrained in our memories forever. These are feelings that all musicians share—how it felt the night we first performed a Beethoven Symphony, how it felt the first time we walked on a stage before a full audience.

I think that sometimes we can lose touch with that early excitement as our careers go forward. It is only natural. After all, life intrudes as we work to pay bills, travel to multiple concerts, maintain our teaching schedule, and struggle to accomplish the administration of life activities that too often control our days. Modern life provides too little time for reflection, and often too little time for activism.

(continued on page 12—see CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT)



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF
SYMPHONY AND OPERA MUSICIANS

*A Player Conference of the
American Federation of Musicians of the
United States and Canada, AFL-CIO*

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Orchestras

Alabama Symphony Orchestra
Atlanta Symphony Orchestra
Baltimore Symphony Orchestra
Boston Symphony Orchestra
Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra
Charlotte Symphony Orchestra
Chicago Lyric Opera Orchestra
Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra
The Cleveland Orchestra
Colorado Symphony Orchestra
Columbus Symphony Orchestra
Dallas Symphony Orchestra
Detroit Symphony Orchestra
Florida Orchestra
Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra
Grant Park Symphony Orchestra
Honolulu Symphony Orchestra
Houston Symphony Orchestra
Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra
Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra
Kansas City Symphony
Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra
Los Angeles Philharmonic
Louisville Orchestra
Metropolitan Opera Orchestra
Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra
Minnesota Orchestra
Nashville Symphony Orchestra
National Symphony Orchestra
New Jersey Symphony Orchestra
New York City Ballet Orchestra
New York City Opera Orchestra
New York Philharmonic
North Carolina Symphony
Oregon Symphony Orchestra
Philadelphia Orchestra
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Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra
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San Diego Symphony Orchestra
San Francisco Ballet Orchestra
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San Francisco Symphony
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Utah Symphony Orchestra
Virginia Symphony

Governing Board

Bruce Ridge, Chairperson
North Carolina Symphony
505 West Aycock Street
Raleigh, NC 27608
919-833-8720 • Cell 919-971-1160
bruceridge@earthlink.net

Brian Rood, President
Kansas City Symphony
9919 Rosewood Lane
Overland Park, KS 66207
913-706-4164
brianrood@sbcglobal.net

Laura Ross, Secretary
Nashville Symphony
1609 Tammany Drive
Nashville, TN 37206
615-227-2379 • Fax 615-259-9140
lar2vln@comcast.net

Michael Moore, Treasurer
Atlanta Symphony
953 Rosedale Road NE
Atlanta, GA 30306
404-875-TUBA (Voice/Fax)
mooretuba@bellsouth.net

Richard Levine, Senza Sordino Editor
San Diego Symphony
6304 Radio Drive
San Diego, CA 92114
619-263-2545 • Fax 619-263-7087
senza@richlevine.com

Matthew Comerford, Member at Large
Chicago Lyric Opera Orchestra
2014 North Pinetree Drive
Arlington Heights, IL 60004
847-392-4135
macmusic3654@yahoo.com

Paul Gunther, Member at Large
Minnesota Orchestra
5532 Rowland Road
Minneapolis, MN 55403
612-232-8689
pbgunther@gmail.com

Cathy Payne, Member at Large
San Francisco Symphony
751 23rd Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94121
415-666-3261
paycat@aol.com

Meredith Snow, Member at Large
Los Angeles Philharmonic
13610 Emelita Street
Van Nuys, CA 91401
818-786-3776
meredsnow@gmail.com

Leonard Leibowitz, ICSOM Counsel *(on leave)*



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President's Report by Brian Rood



Below is President Brian Rood's report at the 2009 ICSOM Conference. Delegates were, and readers are, encouraged to discuss the concerns and issues raised by these remarks, and those of Chairperson Ridge, back home with both colleagues and local officers. Issues presented underscore inadequate Federation

support and regard for ICSOM musicians and their Player Conference. If information is truly power, then we all must actively engage our brothers and sisters across the Federation in constructive dialogue as to our union's future.

Good morning delegates, fellow Governing Board members, AFM officers, staff and honored guests. I would also like to thank Local 125, its officers including President John Lindberg, Conference coordinator Tom Reel and the Virginia Symphony for hosting this conference and helping with the many arrangements. I cannot imagine a more beautiful setting than here in Norfolk along the water. Having grown up in western Michigan, just a stone's throw from Lake Michigan, I feel at home here.

Yet, let us remember why we are in Norfolk. During the 1990s there was considerable debate on the Conference floor regarding locations of future ICSOM conferences. The debate centered on one particular delegate's persistent reminder that orchestras needed our help then as they did in ICSOM's earlier years, when conferences were held in host cities. The delegate stressed that ICSOM should again focus national attention on orchestra "hot spots" throughout the country by going to cities where the host orchestra might benefit from ICSOM's presence. You may recall that the delegate was from North Carolina and is now our esteemed chair, Bruce Ridge. It is an honor to stand proudly with our colleagues from the Virginia Symphony during this difficult time. We hope that ICSOM's presence this week will have a long-lasting and positive effect on their orchestra and community.

While our Conference is entitled the Arts and Economic Recovery, I would like to focus my remarks on the role ICSOM plays in our lives as orchestral performers and union activists.

In 1962 ICSOM was created out of experiences that angered and frustrated our predecessors as they addressed: the lack of fair and competent representation at the bargaining table; problems with their union including the right to ratify contracts; and efforts to attain reasonable job security and decent wages.

Almost fifty years later ICSOM has made enormous progress. In 1962 most orchestra seasons were about six months long. Now, almost half of all ICSOM orchestras have year-round seasons and our average is 44 weeks. Salaries have grown considerably since the 1960s when major orchestras paid less than \$5,000—barely a living wage.

Tremendous progress has been made with pensions, insurance benefits, job security, grievance and arbitration procedures, and

protection against discrimination on the basis of sex, race, age and union activity. The Strike Fund, Emergency Relief Fund (ERF), Code of Ethical Audition Practices, Sphinx scholarships, even the Symphonic Services Division (SSD) itself and perhaps most important, participation at AFM Conventions are the results of ICSOM initiatives and ICSOM follow-through.

What about ICSOM's role today and into the future? Perhaps our most important role is that of advocacy; advocacy within our orchestras, the industry, our locals and Federation.

Bruce, Laura and I represented ICSOM at the ROPA Conference in Dayton just a few days ago. Randy Cohen from the Americans for the Arts gave a terrific presentation on how their organization continues to successfully advance arts funding and awareness. I was gratified to see how the audience enthusiastically embraced Randy's presentation. Thank you, President Lee, for stepping up to the microphone to personally thank Randy.

ICSOM continues to monitor its role with the League of American Orchestras (League) and other organizations that serve our institutions. During last summer's Conference, we discussed the League's OSRs, or orchestra statistical reports. The League teamed up with the Pennsylvania Cultural Data Project to provide a more accurate and reliable OSR than had been the case previously. ICSOM agreed to be involved with the understanding that musicians must have access to the completed OSRs. Orchestra committees, through their chairs, should have access to the online reports of each peer group. In other words, if your orchestra is in Group 1 you should have access to all of Group 1's information including your own orchestra. If you are in Group 2 then you should have access to Group 2. If your chair currently does not have access, have them contact your executive director. If that doesn't work for whatever reason, then contact Jan Wilson at the League. If that doesn't work please contact Bruce or me. It is also our understanding that local presidents are to be provided similar access.

What about other roles for ICSOM going forward?

Partially due to the recession and partially due to efforts by overzealous managers and boards to "roll back" wages, our orchestras have been inundated with requests for concessionary reopeners. ICSOM will continue to provide support through negotiating orchestra conference calls, Governing Board interaction with delegates and committee chairs, articles in *Senza Sordino*, and through Orchestra-L and Delegate-L. As needed, we will issue Calls for Action, which, thanks to the generosity of you and your orchestras as well as our friends throughout the AFM, gave much needed support to our Columbus and Jacksonville colleagues last year.

What about ICSOM's role within our own union?

A major issue since ICSOM's early days has been the relationship between major orchestra musicians and the AFM. In 1966, when

(continued on page 7—see PRESIDENT'S REPORT)

The 2009 ICSOM Conference in Norfolk

by Laura Ross, ICSOM Secretary

The 2009 ICSOM Conference in Norfolk, Virginia, August 19–22, was very successful, thanks in part to a terrific job by the conference coordinator, Tom Reel, as well as to contributions from his colleagues in the Virginia Symphony, Local 125, and its president, John Lindberg. They pulled out all the stops with a harbor cruise and dinner for delegates and guests aboard *The Spirit of Norfolk*. Local 125 also used the cruise to present the tenth annual John Paul Lindberg Arts Supporter of the Year Award to WHRO programming director Dwight Davis. (WHRO is the NPR station for Hampton Roads, Virginia.) A new ICSOM banner, sporting ICSOM's new logo, made its first appearance thanks to contributions by six different arts groups in Norfolk. After slight modifications it will also be available for future ICSOM Conferences. A group of restaurants in the downtown area that are strong supporters of the Virginia Symphony offered free desserts to ICSOM attendees, and many showed their appreciation by frequenting those restaurants.

At the Norfolk Waterside Marriott on Tuesday evening, before the Conference officially began, nearly 40 orchestras participated in a session focusing on negotiating orchestras, which ran far beyond the original time allotted. Of course, the ICSOM Governing Board was hard at work before that with a full day of meetings on Tuesday, though our chairman, Bruce Ridge, was diverted during the lunch hour to participate in a call-in radio show on WHRO that included JoAnn Falletta, the music director of the Virginia Symphony and the Buffalo Philharmonic.

Coming to Norfolk was a homecoming of sorts for our chairman. He grew up in the area, and his first job was with the Virginia Symphony. (He later joined the North Carolina Symphony.) On the Sunday before the Conference, Norfolk's newspaper, the *Virginian-Pilot*, had a two-page article about Bruce, where he and others reflected on his time with the Virginia Symphony and how it has grown. We hope our presence in Norfolk benefited Virginia Symphony musicians, who were in very difficult bargaining during and following the Conference. Following many years of ICSOM

Conferences in Vail, Colorado, Bruce Ridge has been able to follow through on his desire to take ICSOM to member-orchestra locales so that other musicians, not just delegates, could hear and participate in the Conferences. There was a great deal of participation by Virginia Symphony musicians at this Conference; musicians from all host orchestras are encouraged to attend the Conference.

Conferences can be overwhelming for first-time attendees, but they can also be incredibly inspiring and invigorating. Just before this Conference began, new delegates were treated to a breakfast where they met each other and heard brief presentations by ICSOM officers that gave a sense of what was to come. It was a chance to get one's footing and meet a few new friends before the Conference officially began.

In this year of concessionary bargaining, speakers and breakout groups provided a number of unifying messages and experiences. Following the first official roll call of orchestras, Mayor Paul Fraim addressed the group with a message that included his belief that the "arts are a powerful economic engine" and "should be supported as an important ally in our economy." His message was well received, as were the remarks of (proud Local 125 member) JoAnn Falletta.

Following additional introductions and various officer and committee reports, Chairperson Ridge led an interview with Michael Kaiser, the president of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The interview covered a number of topics, including manager and board training, advanced planning for and investment in projects that can inspire an institution and its community, and the importance of projecting a positive message. Mr. Kaiser also touched on a number of points raised in his book, *The Art of the Turnaround*, that attendees found to be both practical and reasonable. One was his belief that organizations in financial trouble will not save their institutions without thoughtful consideration of how (and which) expenses should be cut. He pointed out that, at the Kennedy Center this year, he cut \$11 million from his budget but did not cut his marketing expenses, salaries, artists, or programs. (He did, however, save \$30,000 by cutting out free coffee for the staff.) Mr. Kaiser also answered a number of questions from delegates and guests, who all greatly appreciated Mr. Kaiser's participation. ICSOM applauds Mr. Kaiser's attempts to reach out to arts organizations while traveling to all 50 states with his message of the need for proper training for arts managers, and we hope that managers and board members alike will listen to his message with an open mind. [Editor's Note: See the December 2008 issue of Senza Sordino for a review of Mr. Kaiser's book, *The Art of the Turnaround: Creating and Maintaining Healthy Arts Organizations.*]

Representatives from Americans for the Arts were on hand to encourage participation in their Arts Action Fund and their advocacy program. They were followed by AFM President Tom Lee's speech and a brief question and answer period. A presentation by various Symphonic Services Division (SSD) staff rounded out the first sessions of the day. Newly appointed SSD Director Chris Durham was joined by Nathan Kahn (negotiator), Debbie Newmark (director



Photo by John Lindberg

Above Waterside Drive on the walkway joining The Waterside to the Norfolk Waterside Marriott, a banner sporting ICSOM's new logo welcomes this year's ICSOM Conference to Norfolk, Virginia.

of symphonic electronic media), Doug Lyons (contract administrator), Joe Goldman (benefits specialist), and Barbara Owens (negotiator). Both Joe and Barbara are new additions to the staff. Joe, a Detroit Symphony violinist, has been hired to analyze benefits for negotiating orchestras. Barbara is the former president of Boston Local 9-535 and a current AFM international representative. A moment of silence ended the session to honor Abe Torchinsky, former principal tuba with the Philadelphia Orchestra and founder of the ICSOM emeritus program that bears his name, who died that morning.

Thursday's sessions began with a presentation about negotiations for an Integrated Media Agreement by AFM Counsel Patricia Polach, Debbie Newmark, and ICSOM Electronic Media Chair Bill Foster. This was followed by an update about the American Federation of Musicians and Employers' Pension Fund (AFM-EPF) by Director of Benefits Vinni LoPresti and Director of Finance Will Luebking. In the afternoon, ROPA President Carla Lehmeier-Tatum, OCSM President Francine Schutzman, and RMA President Phil Ayling each spoke about issues of concern to their constituents. They were followed by back-to-back presentations on hearing protection and injury prevention by Minnesota Orchestra assistant principal cellist and author of *Playing (less) Hurt*, Janet Horvath, whose newly updated book recently received an Independent Publisher Book Award. In the evening, rather than holding breakout sessions on specific topics as had been done at recent Conferences, Members at Large Matt Comerford, Paul Gunther, Cathy Payne, and Meredith Snow met with their assigned delegates to discuss various topics of interest.

Friday morning was dedicated to the Conference's annual town meeting, when delegates and the Governing Board meet to discuss issues of mutual concern. Since the town meeting is a closed session, SSD Director Chris Durham met during that session with the numerous local officers attending the Conference. There were local officers representing 14 ICSOM orchestras—from Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Honolulu, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, Norfolk, and Washington, D.C. The afternoon session began with a presentation by AFM Director of Government Relations Hal Ponder, who spoke about his activities on Capitol Hill on behalf of the AFM. Ray Hair, IEB member and Local 72-147 president, gave a terrific presentation on how to develop a protest campaign (warning: giant inflatable rat in attendance), and William Thompson from the University of Louisville graciously agreed to join us to speak about media strategies and the analysis of financial information for use in negotiations and public relations.

Saturday morning began with elections. Matt Comerford was elected to the AFM Convention Delegate position, and Meredith Snow became the alternate. Incumbents President Brian Rood, Secretary Laura Ross, and Members at Large Comerford and Payne all won new two-year terms. Following the elections, AFM Diversity Committee Chair Lovie Smith Wright gave a report that included the activities of the Diversity Committee and the awards process for the upcoming 2010 AFM Convention. That was followed by voting

on resolutions. Retired Chicago Symphony member Sam Denov was honored for his work as a founder of ICSOM. Delegates remembered the important work of three men who died in 2009—financial analyst Ron Bauers, former *Senza Sordino* editor and Cincinnati Symphony violinist Henry Shaw, and former principal tuba with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Abe Torchinsky. ROPA was saluted for celebrating its 25th anniversary as a Player Conference. Delegates applauded Mark Perkins and his Dallas-based advertising and design firm, SullivanPerkins, for creating the new ICSOM logo. Finally, a resolution submitted by numerous delegates directed the ICSOM Governing Board to make public to ICSOM members Bruce Ridge's presentation at the July 2009 Locals' Conferences Council–Player Conferences Council meeting in Las Vegas.

Houston, Texas, was confirmed as the site of the 2010 ICSOM Conference, to be held August 18–21, 2010. Potential sites for the 2011 and 2013 Conferences were briefly mentioned, while Chicago was selected as the site of the 2012 ICSOM Conference. This selection marks the return to the city where ICSOM's first meetings were held 50 years ago, in 1962.

After adjourning what was a very unifying Conference, there was a Member-at-Large–Delegate luncheon, where delegates had more time to discuss issues, both with each other and with members of the Governing Board. Delegate feedback for this year's Conference was decidedly positive.

Text from remarks by Bruce Ridge, Brian Rood, and Paul Fraim, links to the WHRO lunchtime call-in show and to the Virginian-Pilot article about Bruce, and the PowerPoint presentations by Ray Hair and William Thompson are all available on the ICSOM website (icsom.org). Currently you may find the material by selecting "Governance" from the main menu and then clicking "Conferences" and "2009." Adopted Conference resolutions may also be found there, as well as on page 8 of this issue of Senza Sordino.



Photo by Laura Ross

Kennedy Center President Michael Kaiser poses with Bruce Ridge after their interview session.

Orchestra Newslets

On August 29, 2009, under unprecedented pressure from the **Honolulu Symphony** board, the Honolulu Symphony (HSO) musicians ratified an agreement that changed the second year of their 2008–2011 contract, reducing their season from 34 to 29 weeks and their pay by 15%.

When the 2008–2009 season ended on May 10, the HSO musicians were still owed 15 weeks of back pay—more than 44% of their annual salary. The pay situation was even worse than the 2007–2008 season's (which saw the orchestra falling more than 11 weeks behind in pay at one point), and took a tremendous financial, emotional, and physical toll on the musicians. By the end of May, a significant number of musicians had decided not to return for the following season, and more were leaving or contemplating leaving as every week went by.

During the spring and summer of 2009, musician and union leadership met with board and community leaders to share a consistent message: If the musicians were not paid their back pay, there would not be an orchestra to perform when the 2009–2010 season was scheduled to start in September. They also warned that failure to have the season would likely mean the end of the Honolulu Symphony. In response, and noting that most of the funds in the HSO's endowment had been granted by the state, a key state legislator strongly encouraged the Honolulu Symphony Foundation (the separate entity that manages the HSO's endowment) to use the state's funds to collateralize an advance to the HSO in order to pay musician and staff back wages.

Although a \$1.8 million advance—more than enough to cover all employees' back wages—was now to be made available, the Foundation decided to put conditions on its release to the HSO. It divided the money into three parts and set a different condition to release each part: the creation of a "30-60-90 day action plan;" the hiring of a new executive director (the previous executive director had left in June); and the adoption of a "realistic" budget for the 2009–2010 season. This third condition put particular pressure on the musicians, as the Foundation made it clear that a "realistic" budget had to include sizable pay concessions (instead of the 5% salary increase required by the contract). In other words, in order to receive pay for the work that they had already done, musicians would have to agree to accept cuts for the upcoming season.

With their back pay now held hostage, the HSO musicians were immediately engaged in "budgeting meetings" with both Symphony board and Foundation leadership to try to meet the conditions. These meetings included a proposal from the board that musicians' salaries be based on a sliding scale, depending on how well or poorly the HSO's fundraising campaign goes; at one point, the scale showed low-end cuts of over 30%.

While the musicians firmly rejected any sliding scales, they eventually agreed to cut their full-time salary for the 2009–2010 season by nearly 15% by reducing the season from 34 weeks to 29 (thus

preserving the 5% weekly wage increase in the original contract). In addition, the musicians agreed to drop outstanding grievances (and thus all claims for interest or penalties) for late pay from the 2007–2008 and the 2008–2009 seasons. In return, the HSO board agreed to grant a leave of absence to any contracted musician who requests one by September 30, and, most importantly, to remit all back pay owed for the 2008–2009 season. Other terms of the contract—including the original terms for the 2010-11 season—remain in force. The board decided to mandate 15% paycuts for all staff and conductors as well.

On September 4, 2009, HSO musicians finally received the remaining 11 weeks of pay from the 2008–2009 season. As of September 17, however, 16 musicians—nearly one fifth of the contracted orchestra—have already either resigned or taken leaves of absence for the new season, which began September 13. The musicians also remain concerned that, although the revised budget calls for a 36% increase in fundraising over 2008–2009 levels, the make-up of the HSO board remains almost unchanged from the 2008–2009 season.

Steve Flanter, Honolulu Symphony Orchestra Delegate



Members of the **Baltimore Symphony Orchestra** continue to spend their lives in perpetual contract negotiations. An original three-year contract ratified in August 2008 was due to expire in September 2011. In April 2009, in recognition of the economic problems the organization was facing, the musicians agreed to insert a new second year into the agreement, giving one million dollars in concessions, representing an 8% reduction in the salary and benefits package the musicians were scheduled to receive in the 2009–2010 season. On the heels of that agreement came another cry from the employer for yet more relief, and at the end of July, on the evening of the orchestra's last service for the summer, the musicians ratified new wage reductions for the 2009–2010 season, along with a two-week furlough in August 2009. The new deal for the 2009–2010 season calls for a minimum weekly scale of \$1450 which includes a \$7 EMG, the reduction of seniority and personal overscale by 7.5%, the reduction in pension contribution to the AFM-EP Fund from 5% to 4%, and three additional weeks of furlough. In addition, the musicians were informed that their presence is requested back at the negotiating table to devise further cuts to their cba for the 2010–2011 season. As of this writing it is too early in the BSO's season to know what next steps the musicians will take.

Mary Plaine, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra Delegate

President's Report

(continued from page 3)

ICSOM officers were invited at AFM expense to discuss union grievances, the IEB voted to prohibit orchestras from discussing bylaw revisions because they "were not in the best interests of the AFM."¹

At the 1979 Convention, AFM delegates imposed Federation work dues on symphonic players, the result of which was that 3,919 symphonic orchestra musicians (1.3% of the Federation's membership) carried 37% of the AFM budget. Delegates to the 1980 ICSOM Conference deplored contributing so heavily to the Federation while having so little voting power that they passed a resolution calling for repeal of what they considered an unfair tax.²

During the 1980s and 1990s AFM-ICSOM relations were strained by a continuing dilemma; orchestra musicians, with fixed contracts and steady wages, paid a high percentage of union dues, sometime with little return in services; at the same time they constituted just a small percentage of the total Federation membership and thus had virtually no voting power when matched against the many part-time musicians and life members in the AFM.³

Let us take the opportunity, though, to give credit where credit is due. Improvements have been made. Player Conferences are invited to AFM Conventions, although in non-voting capacities. AFM bylaws were changed to mandate that locals provide specific services to orchestras. Rank-and-file orchestral musicians chosen by ICSOM and ROPA are active participants in symphonic national media negotiations. There have been other improvements, to be sure.

However, the SSD, long sought by ICSOM, continues to provide far fewer services and with less staff than the dues paid by ICSOM and ROPA musicians should support. I will say this again, Federation resources spent on SSD services and staffing continue to pale in comparison to the dues paid by symphonic orchestral musicians. Take current salaries, for example. In 2008, SSD staff salaries in both Canada and the US made up less than 10% of the total salaries paid to all AFM staff.⁴ In contrast, symphonic musicians contribute 55% of the total AFM work dues.

Looking ahead to next summer's AFM Convention, symphonic musicians ask how the AFM will protect their jobs during the deepest recession of our lifetimes. Will ICSOM and the other Player Conferences be treated throughout the Federation as friends and not foes? Will future issues of our union paper, the International Musician (IM), welcome or even acknowledge ICSOM instead of ignoring us while taking our orchestras' advertising dollars?

^{1, 2, 3} From *ICSOM: Forty Years of the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians*, by Tom Hall (Oscar's House Press, 2002), which is based on minutes of the annual Conferences, *Senza Sordino*, and additional source material.

⁴ Data obtained from 2008 U.S. DOL LM-2, filed March 31, 2009, and 2008 AFM US-Canada Annual Report, including Auditor's Report, p.19.

This month's IM, with August as the annual symphonic issue, scarcely mentions ICSOM, and then only as a distant reference. One was at the end of a four column piece on auditions. ICSOM pioneers, in fact, led the movement that resulted in the current code of ethical audition practices referenced in the article.

Another IM piece was devoted to the Strike Fund, which failed to acknowledge that ICSOM, ROPA and OCSM directly elect their rank-and-file trustees, per AFM bylaws.

Instead of using quotes from musician committee members in the column about the Charlotte Symphony's financial struggles, management's public relations director is quoted. Would it not be better for a union paper to solicit quotes from union members than from management?

We all wish Stanley Drucker the very best as he steps away from the New York Philharmonic after such a legendary career. And yet, ROPA just celebrated its 25th anniversary this month. Did ROPA not deserve to be on the cover of the annual symphonic issue? Our ROPA colleagues constitute the largest Player Conference in the AFM, and, as mentioned, the symphonic conferences together fund 55% of the total Federation work dues.

Why was ICSOM so notably excluded from the August IM symphonic issue? Be assured that the GB raises these and a host of other issues regularly to Federation leadership and staff.

However, we are all in this together; rank-and-file, player conferences, local officers, federation officers and staff. We must reach out to one another and we must be heard by those that are elected to serve this great union.

Minnesota Orchestra musician Julie Ayer wrote a terrific book entitled *More Than Meets the Ear: How Symphony Musicians Made Labor History*. In discussing the importance of ICSOM, Julie quotes an article written by one of the early editors of *Senza Sordino*, Henry Shaw, who recently passed away. Henry wrote:

To tell what has transpired since 1962 should become a part of new member orientation. It must be emphasized that ICSOM is an investment and it must be protected. Perhaps an occasional reminder of difficulties that had to be dealt with is in order, along with the admonition that history can surely repeat itself where complacency becomes the order of the day.

We have a unique opportunity this week to learn from one another and our many presenters. Together, let us discuss and define ICSOM's role so that our voices as symphonic musicians and union activists will be clearly heard long into the future.

Thank you for being here, and let's have a great Conference.

Resolutions Adopted at the 2009 ICSOM Conference

Sam Denov

WHEREAS, Sam Denov was a leader and member of the Chicago Symphony at the formation of the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians in 1962; and

WHEREAS, He served ICSOM in those early years in a variety of leadership capacities including Vice-Chairman from 1963-66 and then again in 1968-69, as Editor of *Senza Sordino* while serving as Vice-Chairman from 1965-66, and finally as Chairman of ICSOM from 1969-70; and

WHEREAS, As Vice-Chairman and then Chairman of ICSOM, Sam Denov helped fulfill George Zazofsky's and ICSOM's goal of establishing the AFM Strike Fund in 1970; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the delegates and officers of ICSOM recognize, thank and honor Sam Denov for his many contributions as an early leader in the orchestra field; and, be it further

RESOLVED, As a token of that recognition for Sam Denov's work on ICSOM's behalf, he be given a framed copy of this resolution as an expression of ICSOM's respect and admiration as an ICSOM Founder.

Submitted by the Governing Board

Ron Bauers

WHEREAS, Understanding orchestra financial reports is of key importance during collective bargaining negotiations and in ongoing contract discussions with our managers; and

WHEREAS, Musician/accountant/teacher Ron Bauers assisted orchestras in North America through his evaluation of audited financial reports and IRS Form 990 reports; and

WHEREAS, These reports were designed for public consumption, making it difficult for orchestra managers to dispute the results; and

WHEREAS, Ron Bauers was able to take dry, financial information and make it understandable and even entertaining; and

WHEREAS, Ron's untimely death in January 2009 was felt not only by his friends and colleagues, but by orchestras across North America; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Officers and Delegates of the 2009 ICSOM Conference express their deepest admiration and respect on behalf of all musicians in memory of a devoted friend and colleague.

Submitted by the Governing Board

Henry Shaw

WHEREAS, Henry Shaw was one of ICSOM's greatest *Senza Sordino* editors, holding the post from 1972 to 1982; and

WHEREAS, Henry understood that one of the core values of ICSOM was the importance of communication and sharing of information amongst its orchestras; and

WHEREAS, His prodigious efforts produced sixty issues (plus one supplement) of *Senza Sordino* over that 10 year period that were on deadline without the assistance of current technology; and

WHEREAS, During this time, Henry also served as Assistant Principal Second Violin of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and he served as a member of his orchestra's committee; and

WHEREAS, The many ICSOM officers and delegates past and present who have known Henry mourn his passing this past March; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the delegates of the 2009 ICSOM Conference express their condolences to his wife and family; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be presented to his wife, Bobbi Shaw, as a token of their respect and esteem for his many contributions to ICSOM.

Submitted by the Governing Board

Mark Perkins and SullivanPerkins

WHEREAS, Mark Perkins and his advertising and design firm, SullivanPerkins, worked diligently, professionally, and successfully designing the new ICSOM logo; and

WHEREAS, Mark Perkins and his colleagues at SullivanPerkins spent months creating and submitting numerous possible logos, all worthy of consideration; and

WHEREAS, They were patient, accommodating, and productive while the ICSOM governing board discussed the proposed logos and made suggestions for various revisions, finally coming to consensus on a logo offered during SullivanPerkins' first round of selections; and

WHEREAS, SullivanPerkins not only provided the logo in many forms and file types for various uses, but also supplied a comprehensive use and standards guide; and

WHEREAS, Mark Perkins highly values and appreciates music and other art forms, as demonstrated by his long-time support of numerous arts, cultural, and educational organizations, including the Dallas Symphony and the Dallas Opera; and

WHEREAS, Mark Perkins and SullivanPerkins have been generous with both their time and resources to the great benefit of ICSOM; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the ICSOM governing board and the delegates of the 2009 ICSOM Conference thank Mark Perkins and SullivanPerkins for their support of music and ICSOM and for their tremendous generosity and creativity in providing the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians with its new logo.

Submitted by the Governing Board

ROPA

WHEREAS, The ROPA Conference in Dayton, Ohio marked the 25th anniversary of the Regional Orchestra Players' Association; and

WHEREAS, Before 1984, regional orchestras across the nation were faced with unique problems and challenges not encountered by major orchestras represented by ICSOM; and

WHEREAS, Before 1984, musicians in regional orchestras had no Player Conference representation in the AFM or any established means of networking; and

WHEREAS, Nathan Kahn, who was elected as ROPA's first president in 1984, was instrumental in organizing the musicians of regional orchestras; and

WHEREAS, The following orchestras are charter members of ROPA—Austin Symphony Orchestra, Charlotte Symphony Orchestra, Colorado Springs Symphony Orchestra, Columbus Symphony Orchestra, Florida Orchestra, Fort Wayne Philharmonic, Fort Worth Symphony, Grand Rapids Symphony, Hartford Symphony Orchestra, Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra, Memphis Symphony Orchestra, Nashville Symphony Orchestra, New Mexico Symphony Orchestra, Omaha Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonic Orchestra of Florida (Florida Philharmonic), Richmond Symphony, Sacramento Symphony, San Jose Symphony, Spokane Symphony, Tulsa Philharmonic, Virginia Symphony and Wichita Symphony Orchestra; and

WHEREAS, The following Delegates and official guests attended the first ROPA Conference in Columbus, Ohio, in 1984—Chris Allen, Brian Bell, Mike Buccicone, Tom Dale, Chris Durham and Steve Secan from Columbus; Nancy Levine, Janis Nilsen, Elizabeth Pistolessi and Carol Stumpf from Charlotte; Buddy Pitts and Mark Tetreault from Jacksonville; Nathan Kahn and Rick Ricker from Nashville; Leonard Byrne and Richard Totusek from Spokane; Bruce Schultz and Weymouth Young from Tulsa; Gary Wisner from Florida; Sam Gnagey from Fort Wayne; Jane Owen from Fort Worth; Russ Schultz from Memphis; Tom Derthick from Sacramento; Joanne Tanner from San Jose; Dennis Danders from Wichita; John Palanchian and Fred Zenone from ICSOM; and AFM President Victor Fuentealba and AFM Symphonic Services Director Lew Waldeck; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the delegates of the 2009 ICSOM Conference hereby recognize and honor the charter member orchestras of ROPA, and the attendees of the first ROPA Conference in Columbus, Ohio, in 1984, for their courage and vision in joining together to seek solutions to their common challenges, and for establishing the Regional Orchestra Players' Association, which serves thousands of working musicians in 78 member orchestras across the United States today; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the delegates of the 2009 ICSOM Conference enthusiastically and whole-heartedly congratulate ROPA on the celebration of its 25th anniversary.

Submitted by the Governing Board

Abe Torchinsky

WHEREAS, Abe Torchinsky was one of ICSOM's great supporters during his tenure as principal tuba with the Philadelphia Orchestra from 1949 through 1972; and

WHEREAS, Abe was also acknowledged as one of the world's finest tuba instructors, preparing many members of the tuba community in our symphony orchestras today when he was a professor at the Curtis Institute of Music from 1949 through 1972 and the University of Michigan School of Music from 1972 through 1989; and

WHEREAS, Abe established and administered the ICSOM Emeritus Program which enabled retired ICSOM musicians to continue to be a part of the ICSOM community through a continued subscription to *Senza Sordino* and inclusion in the ICSOM Directory; and

WHEREAS, His contribution as administrator for 20 years, from 1983 to 2003 brought about a renaming of this program as the Abe Torchinsky ICSOM Emeritus Program; and

WHEREAS, News of Abe's death reached ICSOM during its annual conference in Norfolk, VA; and

WHEREAS, Abe's death was immediately felt by the delegates and guests attending the ICSOM conference along with his many friends and colleagues around the world; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Officers and Delegates of the 2009 ICSOM Conference express their deep sadness for the loss of a friend and colleague who touched countless musicians' lives during his long and prolific career.

Submitted by the Governing Board

Presentation to the IEB, PCC, and LCC

WHEREAS, ICSOM Chairman Bruce Ridge made a presentation to the AFM International Executive Board, the Player Conferences Council, and the Locals' Conferences Council in July 2009; and

WHEREAS, A major focus of the presentation was the process by which AFM President Tom Lee hired a replacement for former SSD Director Laura Brownell; and

WHEREAS, The information in the presentation regarding that process was shared by Chairman Ridge with the delegates to the 2009 ICSOM Conference; and

WHEREAS, The delegates to the 2009 ICSOM Conference believe that the information about how the process was delayed and subverted and how the recommendations of the symphonic Player Conferences were disregarded is important for the members of ICSOM orchestras to know; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the delegates to the 2009 ICSOM Conference direct the Governing Board to make public Chairman Ridge's presentation to the International Executive Board in such a way as to ensure the widest possible dissemination to ICSOM orchestras and their AFM Locals.

Submitted by:

David Angus (Rochester)

David Everson (Detroit)

Rachel Goldstein (Chicago Symphony)

David Heyde (Dallas)

John Koen (Philadelphia)

Robert Levine (Milwaukee)

Leslie Ludena (San Francisco Opera)

Kenneth Mirkin (New York Philharmonic)

Thalia Moore (San Francisco Ballet)

Norbert Nielubowski (Minnesota)

Lembi Veskimets (Cleveland)

Christian Woehr (Saint Louis)

Lawrence Wolfe (Boston)

AFM Support of Symphony Musicians

(continued from page 1)

negotiator, and one negotiator who must also split his duties as director of the division.

While we understand from conversations with the new director that an analysis of staff positions is underway, and that a few new people are being brought into the department, we nonetheless have to wonder why it took so long to begin these critical moves. Reluctantly, we must express our dismay, and the dismay of ICSOM's 4,000 members in 51 orchestras, that in our time of greatest need, the Federation stood largely silent.

In this year of need, the position of director of the SSD remained unfilled for 9 or 10 months, depending on just when you start counting. From the time that the previous director announced that she would be leaving, it was six or seven months before the process had moved along far enough to even begin the interview sessions, the cost of which (by the way) was borne by the Player Conferences and not the Federation. Following those interviews, it was over three more months before an appointment was made, despite the fact that the unanimous recommendation of the Symphonic Player Conferences was delivered in person to the president of the Federation on January 8.

About the appointment, let me be clear: It is our desire that the Division succeed in its mission, and it is our fervent intention to work with the new director and to help him in any way possible. He does have our support. But, it should be known and acknowledged that he was not the unanimous choice of the musicians he will be representing, and the invidious process through which the final selection was made was unfortunate, misleading, damaging, divisive...and, more than anything else...utterly unnecessary.

We do appreciate that talks were held with our unanimous choice, a person that had unique abilities and represented the best hope for a harmonious department and strong relationships throughout the field. But, it is stunning to us that the talks broke down over what would best be described as a small amount of money. This, especially when we were told that the one unsailable requirement for a new director would be residency in New York. As the new director will not be fulfilling that requirement, the added expenses to the Federation in travel costs alone would more than make up for the difference in salary that cost us our unanimous choice.

Despite that small figure, I was able to convince the unanimous choice to reconsider and accept the president's last, best and final salary offer. I did so following a consultation with the president, and I did so with the president's full knowledge.

Despite my success, we were shocked to learn that while I was doing the Federation's bidding, the president was offering the position to a candidate who had not even been mentioned to me in a conversation that same day. Within 18 hours, the president had been notified that my talks with the unanimous choice had been successful, and that he was willing to accept the president's offer.

Imagine my embarrassment. Imagine how mystified I must have felt by this turn of events after spending the first few years of my term as chairman of ICSOM working to build a supportive and friendly relationship with the president, the IEB, and every local officer I could meet.

Regarding my ability to convince the unanimous choice to accept the president's offer, let me state firmly that ICSOM never made an offer to make up the difference in salary. Rather, it was merely my conveyance of the fact that working with ICSOM, ROPA, and OCSM afforded the unanimous choice an opportunity to make a huge difference in the field, and that is what convinced him to accept a position with the Federation even though it represented a difficult cut in pay from his current position.

But, unknown to me, and unknown to the candidate, and unknown to the representatives of the other Player Conferences, the position was no longer open.

Why? Why create ill will so unnecessarily? Why create ill will where none existed? How does treating loyal friends like this serve the cause of unity? How does this invidious action serve the symphonic members of this union, or for that matter any member of this union?

Still, we must move forward. And while this breach of trust and friendship was not caused by the leadership of the Player Conferences or our members, we remain eager and willing to attempt to restore the trust that has been lost. We simply must do so in order to keep this union alive, and in order to serve the members that support it so loyally.

Despite the fact that symphonic musicians make up only about 10% of the Federation's membership, in 2007 figures they support the union financially through 55% of the work dues, translating into around \$2 million a year. ICSOM alone has over 4,000 members in approximately 46 locals, and none of these locals could survive without the financial support of their ICSOM orchestras. Recognizing this, ICSOM has worked to reach out to our local officers, advocating for improved, supportive and strong relationships. We have begun sending our newsletter to every local in the country, and I am delighted that many of these locals have reciprocated. I now receive their newsletters as well. I learn so much about our union and our musicians through these local newsletters.

In my travels across the country I have always made sure to visit with the local officers as I meet with the orchestras. It is my

Senza Sordino is the official voice of ICSOM and reflects ICSOM policy. However, there are many topics discussed in *Senza Sordino* on which ICSOM has no official policy; the opinions thus expressed in *Senza Sordino* are those of the author(s) and not necessarily of ICSOM, its officers or members. Articles and letters expressing differing viewpoints are welcomed.

desire to visit not only our nation's great concert halls, but our great union halls as well. Building trusting relationships throughout the union and the field is the primary goal of this Governing Board of ICSOM.

In the midst of these criticisms, I do want to acknowledge and offer our appreciation for several things. As we prepare for our annual Conference, we are interested in offering a platform for the AFM to advance its legislative agenda. We are grateful to President Lee for allowing Hal Ponder to travel to Norfolk to address our delegates. And we are further grateful that Trish Polach will be able to attend to address the new Integrated Media Agreement.

It is true that the Federation has indeed been willing to invest in national media contracts, but as important as national media is to our orchestras, these media contracts result in but a fraction of our incomes, and as we face this unprecedented crisis, no national media contract will save any orchestra. Still, we are grateful that at least this investment has been made by the Federation.

In this economic downturn, another source of great concern for our members is the health of the AFM Pension plan. It is our hope that the representatives of the AFM-EPF who will be attending our conference will address these concerns, and we are again grateful to the president for authorizing their attendance. We further hope and expect that the president will also address these pension concerns in his address to the delegates, and will offer the same update that has been received by the Southern Conference, among others.

Despite the crisis that has occurred in this year of need, some orchestras continue to make advancements. San Francisco, Dallas, Saint Louis, among a handful others, have settled contracts that demonstrate gains. This is indicative of the viability of the art form we practice. Our musicians must be prepared to help educate their boards and managements as to the best way we can be positioned to benefit from the recovery that lies ahead. But in order to do that, we need unity and we need investment in the Symphonic Services Division. Our network of communication must be more efficient. An investment in the department would mean both additional staff, as well as competitive pay for the most qualified people.

I use the word investment, as that is precisely what a new dedication to the SSD would mean for the Federation. As previously stated, the support of ICSOM, ROPA, and OCSM musicians means \$2 million a year to the Federation's roughly \$10 million budget.

The managers have an instant network that can communicate strategies that have called for permanent reductions in the budget and pay scales of our orchestras. We must be prepared to fight that. Our musicians need services, education, support, quick answers, and timely tools such as the wage charts. We must stand united against any attempt by any manager to take advantage of this temporary cyclical downturn in the economy. The managers have developed a new catch phrase to replace the old phrase of "structural deficit." The new catch phrase is "The new economic reality." We really

don't know what is so new about a recession. Instead, I have taken to calling the manager's new phrase "The New Apocalypticism."

In 1958, the United States found itself mired in a deep recession. Sales of automobiles that year fell 31%, and unemployment in Detroit stood at 20%, which is a comparable figure to 2009. There was a debate within the Eisenhower administration about the budget, with the president insisting on a balanced budget from the Congress, and with Vice-President Nixon concerned that such a balanced budget could deepen the recession, leading to mid-term election losses and undermining his own campaign for the presidency in 1960. Eisenhower won out, the recession deepened, and Nixon lost the 1960 election, due in part to the economy (and also several thousand votes harvested from cemeteries on the outskirts of Chicago.) I've always thought the lesson of this was that, in a recession, you don't balance your budget, but you manage your debt.

The pay cuts we are seeing will create great hardships for AFM members. The reduction in salary will mean a reduction in work dues generated for the Federation. But more so, it will mean higher health costs for musicians, as well as increased struggles to care for their families. Orchestral musicians are a small percentage of the AFM's members, but we pay a disproportionate amount in dues. In this year of need, our members simply do not have any more to give in dues.

I urge you to invest in this understaffed department. I urge you to invest in your members. I urge you to serve the needs of those who stand ready to serve each other, their communities, and the union.

When hands of trust and friendship are extended, I urge you to reach back. We can and we must heal the damage that has been done to the relationship this season. For if further acts of neglect or further breaches of trust are incurred, we risk going down a path of divisiveness that has haunted other areas of the Federation.

The crisis is not over for orchestras in America. Even as the economy begins its slow recovery, our orchestras face tremendous difficulties as endowments suffer, and charitable giving is diminished. It will be the rededication of our musicians to serving their communities that saves our orchestras.

This year's ICSOM Conference in Norfolk, Virginia, will be perhaps one of our most important meetings in our history. Our presence in Norfolk will serve to bring attention to the plight of the Virginia Symphony as that great orchestra fights for survival and reinvestment. We are excited that Mr. Michael Kaiser, perhaps the most expert consultant on arts organizations in America, will be there to address how our orchestras can thrive into the future.

Going forward, we pledge to communicate our needs, and we renew a pledge that we have never broken. All of our communications will be in the interest of our members and the AFM, and I believe that you know that all of our communication will be open, courteous, and forthright. We are advocates for unity. Please, join us in this cause.

Chairperson's Report

(continued from page 2)

But we must never lose touch with the musicians we were at the start of our journeys. The greatest musicians among us are those who are still inspired by the opportunity to inspire.

In this year of difficulties, when economic pressures on arts organizations weigh on us all, it might be easy to give in to frustrations, and those moments of inspiration might be more difficult to reach in light of the negativity that surrounds us. But it is precisely in times of difficulty that our idealism must be relied on and nurtured. In order to move forward and to continue to inspire ourselves as well as our communities, we must re-engage in our mission of advocacy. All musicians must work to demonstrate the value of our orchestras to our cities and our audiences. Our colleagues look to those of us in this room for leadership, and we must respond, now more than ever.

Sometimes, going through the necessary soul searching over whether or not to fight a battle can be more difficult than the battle itself. We ask ourselves now if we shouldn't just give in and allow the media to define the future of our orchestras, or if we should once again reach into the well of inspiration that came so easily in our earliest days as musicians to re-inspire ourselves as well as our colleagues and our communities.

This has been a hard year. This has been a time when musicians have had to become economists. And frankly, we are every bit as knowledgeable as some of the paid pundits that have promulgated a flood of negativity in the 24-hour news cycle. That constant chatter has professed an atmosphere of disaster and depression upon us all, hindering the nation's recovery from this cyclical economic downturn. The assertion of apocalypticism has made its way into our field, where managers have sought to create what they call "A New Economic Reality" that merely would serve to reduce our organizations to a size that their skill levels are capable of managing.

This, of course, is not true everywhere. Even in this climate, some talented managers have led their orchestras in advances for their communities. But in many cases we have not been asked merely to address the temporary situation that we all acknowledge, but we have been threatened that if we don't accept a permanent reduction in our artistic mission, our organizations will cease to exist.

It is a negativity that permeates society's view of the arts. We hear news accounts of school systems eliminating bands and orchestras, even though we know that students who participate in music programs are far more likely to stay in school, and actually even enjoy learning. When faced with a view that the arts are dispensable, we have to ask ourselves what kind of children do we want to rear, and we have to ask ourselves what kind of country do we want to be.

There are signs of recovery. Last month was the best July in the stock market since 1989, and the best month overall since 2002. We must be poised to take advantage of the impending recovery, even if our managements are not. We must be looking to restore our commitment to the growth of our orchestras, even if our

managements are not. And we must demonstrate that we are capable of inspiring our communities and our colleagues, even if our managements are not.

As we fight against this promulgated negativity, we must also fight against our own apathy and frustration. We must lead our colleagues from their frustrations as well. This is truly a time for activism and inspiration, and the need has never been greater.

We have seen the results of grassroots efforts. In concert with our friends at Americans for the Arts, artists led the call for support of the arts in the economic stimulus package put forth by the new administration. We have seen musicians post petitions calling for a Secretary of the Arts and they have been successful in getting hundreds of thousands of signatures.

Let us not falter in our mission. Let us not be discouraged, but instead let us be inspired to greater activism. We all must be engaged in advocacy for our art form, for our communities, and for our friends. We must not allow hard times to impair our idealism. Our enemy is apathy, and our enemy is frustration.

There is a poem that I think most of us feel is too trite to quote. While it was written by Arthur O'Shaughnessy, I really think I probably learned it from Willy Wonka. "We are the music makers, and we are the dreamers of dreams..."

In a world that values discord over debate, where negativity dominates television ratings for talking heads who must merely out-shout their opposition in order to be rebooked, the musicians of America's orchestras continue to offer our message of hope. We are the sound of reason in a noisy world, and we are a beacon in a destructive sea.

In a world that can be at times disheartening, we must not be disheartened. We must not doubt ourselves or the value of what we



Photo by Chris Woehr

Sunday, after the Conference ended, Governing Board members look pleased that their meetings are almost over. *Left to right:* Matt Comerford, Meredith Snow, Bruce Ridge, Brian Rood, Cathy Payne, Richard Levine, Paul Gunther, Laura Ross, Michael Moore.

do. This is not a time to be discouraged. This is a time to renew your commitment. Reach back in your memories to the earliest moments of your career, and see yourself now the way that you saw music as a student.

We have seen our nation respond to messages of hope in this year. In the speech I cited earlier, Mr. Mandela went on to say, "As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others." But, it is not only the communities that surround our orchestras that are eager to feel enlightened in the way Mr. Mandela professed, but is it also the internal community of our union.

ICSOM was founded largely to achieve recognition from our union, and that struggle for recognition continues nearly 50 years later. In this time of crisis for orchestras in America, our musicians have never needed the support of the Federation more, and I am saddened to say that they have never had it less.

In this year of need, the position of director of the Symphonic Services Division was left unfilled for 10 months. In this year of need, as musicians faced heartbreaking decisions about reductions in their salaries and seasons, the Federation has stood largely silent. In this year of need, when the friendship of the symphonic players conferences led to unanimous recommendations that could have served to lead us to a new era of unity, those unanimous recommendations were dismissed.

Symphonic musicians keep this union alive. We provide financial support through 55% of the Federation work dues, but our voices are still too often ignored. While we will continue to offer a voice that can unify and not divide, that voice must not be denied by a Federation that would accept our money but reject our ideas.

When we extend our hand in friendship and unity, the leadership of the Federation must reach back. You cannot lead by dividing; by dividing, you can only retain power.

In this week, we will again offer our hand of friendship and unity, and we will again demonstrate that leadership is born of trust. Recently, before the International Executive Board of the AFM, I said that we are advocates of unity, and I invited them to join us in our cause. I again issue that invitation, and we offer our hand to move forward with a new dialogue.

We have all arrived here today weary from a year of bad news, filled with unexpected renegotiations and dire prognostications about the future of our orchestras. But in life, every crisis is also an opportunity. Despite the din of negativity, there are positive signs that can lead us to a renewed period of activism.

Artists from across the country, working together with Americans for the Arts, helped to generate over 85,000 letters to Congress in support of funds for the National Endowment for the Arts. Now is the time for a new emphasis on the value of music in

education and the economy, and this effort must be led by the musicians of our nations' orchestras. Let us spend this week supporting and inspiring each other, and then let us spread the message to all of our colleagues that there is reason for hope, and that there are things that we will accomplish together that we could never accomplish apart.

Even in this difficult time, we have seen reports that attendance at our concerts is rising in many places. There remains a community of loyal supporters eager to hear our music and our voices, and they can be joined by a new generation of audiences that seek solace from the onslaught of divisiveness.

Here in Hampton Roads, home of the Virginia Symphony, the arts have an annual economic impact of over \$365 million. Here in Hampton Roads, the arts employ nearly 6,000 people. Cultural events in these cities result in over \$193 million in audience spending. This is the fifth largest metropolitan area in the southeast, home to over 1.7 million citizens. And since 1920, it has been home to the Virginia Symphony.

The Virginia Symphony began as the Norfolk Symphony, and in the late 70s it went through several name changes as it attempted to brand itself as one of the nation's finest orchestras. The orchestra has achieved great artistic success, especially now under the eloquent leadership of our great friend JoAnn Falletta. But the future of this orchestra is at risk, as inconceivable as that can be. Some would have us believe that only economic factors are contributing to these difficulties, but I know the citizens of Hampton Roads have never doubted the value of this orchestra.

Too often across the country, especially in this year of difficulties, we have seen this scenario repeated. The musicians of America's greatest orchestras have come to Norfolk to support our colleagues in the Virginia Symphony, and to demonstrate to the citizens of Hampton Roads that there is a jewel in their midst and it must be nurtured. Had there been no Virginia Symphony, my life would have been radically different and far less meaningful. There are children today that must not be deprived of the same opportunities afforded me. This orchestra will not only survive, but it will thrive and grow to match the vision of the musicians who maintain the historic legacy begun almost 90 years ago.

And just as we have come here this week, we will stand with any orchestra in need. These are not times that call for hand-wringing and threats of bankruptcy, these are times that call for vision and leadership.

I am honored and humbled to serve as chair of ICSOM, and on a daily basis I am inspired by the musicians of America. I feel constantly connected to the work we all do, and I am aware during every concert I play that, at the very same moment, my friends across the country are performing before their loyal audiences as well.

(continued on page 14—see CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT)

Chairperson's Report

(continued from page 13)

I have relied on the members of the Governing Board of ICSOM for support and wisdom, perhaps this year more than ever before. No amount of praise would be adequate to describe the work they do on your behalf, or to compensate for the sacrifices they make to serve the cause of musicians everywhere. We work together with a camaraderie and unity that seems rare in the world today. Our debates are open and enlightening, and our only focus has been to serve the cause of the musicians who have placed their trust in us.

We do have an absent friend this year. Our thoughts and best wishes are with our legendary counsel, Leonard Leibowitz, who is currently on leave from his work with ICSOM, and this week will afford us an opportunity to discuss some of the circumstances that surround his absence.

What is it that we seek to accomplish here this week? I hope that this convocation will serve to dispel any defeatism we might face, either from within or without. As Nelson Mandela said: "Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that frightens us

most. We ask ourselves Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be?"

At a time when there are many who doubt America's orchestras, we will not doubt ourselves. We will leave here with a renewed spirit of activism, and we will take this message to our colleagues back home. This judgment we make affirmatively: together, we can be powerful beyond measure.

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